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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
NSC FOR JWOOD  
OSD FOR SHIVERS  
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A. CG CJTF-82 POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/10/2017

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SUBJECT: U.S.-AFGHAN-PAKISTANI TRILATERAL: MOVING FORWARD  
ON THE CROSS-BORDER JIRGA, COOPERATING AGAINST TERRORISM

Classified By: DCM Chris Dell, Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

1.(C) SUMMARY: Afghan National Security Advisor (NSA) Rassoul and Pakistani NSA Aziz, in a September 11 trilateral meeting with the Deputy Secretary, agreed on the need to capitalize on the positive momentum created by the August 9-12 Afghan-Pakistan cross-border Peace Jirga. Rassoul pushed hard for the two nations to intensify work through existing Afghan-Pakistan connections -- e.g., the trilateral military committee, intelligence exchanges, economic and trade links, and people-to-people exchanges -- to achieve concrete results, in particular with regard to counterterrorism efforts against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. They agreed that once the 50 members (25 per side) of the Jirga are named, its establishment could be announced at a meeting between Presidents Karzai and Musharraf, to demonstrate publicly improved Aghan-Pakistani bilateral relations and to underscore their joint efforts against terrorism. The three sides also discussed maintaining the Rassoul-Aziz channel of bilateral communication, the improved tone of public discourse between the two governments, increasing Afghan-Pakistani cooperation on facilitating border crossings, engaging tribes with ties on both sides of the border to assist in monitoring illegal border crossings by terrorists, developing border areas, improving assistance for refugees returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan, and the need to get the business community more deeply engaged on both sides of the border.  
END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Deputy Secretary Negroponte and Pakistani NSA Tariq Aziz were hosted by Afghan NSA Zalmi Rassoul on September 11, 2007, in Kabul for a 90-minute trilateral discussion focused on terrorism and how best to capitalize on the positive momentum generated by the August 9-12 Afghan-Pakistani Peace Jirga.

Terrorism and Extremism -- the Common Enemy

¶3. (C) Rassoul recalled that Aziz at an earlier encounter had said that terrorism is a major threat to Pakistan, and he urged that the two nations work together and with the U.S. to "defeat the villain." Aziz agreed that terrorism and extremism are the

common enemy. Pakistan has suffered from it. Aziz noted that the fight against the Soviets was a fight against infidels. Now illiterate people in Pakistan are confused because the enemy is also Muslim. The Pakistani military is still more prepared to fight a regular war than a war in the FATA, but the military is now realizing that terrorists are the enemy. It is not a religious war, he added, but a political war in which the extremists want to impose their own way of life using un-Islamic means -- suicide bombings, killing of innocents. Aziz noted that after five years in power, the Taliban's governance was marked by anarchy and brute force. Rassoul agreed, noting that although majorities in Afghanistan and Pakistan oppose the extremist vision, the people are afraid of extremist brutality. Rassoul urged that if the GOP has information on things happening in Afghanistan, it should share them. For example, the IROA had information from human sources that Mullah Omar is staying near Peshawar. Two or three solid exchanges of intelligence will demonstrate the good relations between the two countries. Aziz noted that perceptions may differ on whether some individuals were involved in terrorism and violence, but he welcomed help from Afghanistan from time to time.

14. (C) Rassoul said President Karzai is prepared to accept Taliban who are ready to drop their weapons and accept the new vision of Afghanistan. There is a need to separate those who joined the Taliban out of poverty or ignorance from those who are dedicated to extremism and violence. Also, the Taliban and al-Qaida need to be denied sanctuary and assistance.

This was discussed at the Peace Jirga, Rassoul said, adding that the question is how to make it work.

15. (C) Rassoul summarized the counterterrorism discussion with three points: the security and stability of Pakistan is vital to Afghanistan; neither Afghanistan nor Pakistan can defeat al-Qaida and the Taliban without each other; and al-Qaida can only be defeated in this region -- it cannot survive anywhere else. Defeating the terrorists is not only necessary for Afghanistan, but also for the sake of the security of the world. Afghanistan and Pakistan need to find practical ways, step by step, to address security issues. Rassoul was convinced that strong cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan will defeat al-Qaida and the Taliban.

#### Moving Forward on the Jirga

16. (C) Rassoul praised the outcome of the Peace Jirga, saying it created a new dynamic on issues ranging from counterterrorism, economic and trade issues to bilateral contacts. He suggested the two sides use the Jirga to make progress in the FATA, in exposing the connections of terrorists, and in improving bilateral communications. Afghan-Pakistani connections exist for cooperation: the tripartite military committee is working well; the regular meetings to exchange intelligence are "serious" but are not yet giving the results the IROA want; bilateral trade is going well. The two sides need to make these connections work.

17. (C) Aziz said Pakistan was still selecting the 25 Pakistani members of the Jirga. The fifty members should be people with a real stake in cross-border Afghan-Pakistani relations. Rassoul said the Afghan side is finalizing its list of 25. They agreed that once the 50 members of the Jirga (25 per side) are named, its establishment should be announced in the context of a meeting between Presidents Karzai and Musharraf in order to demonstrate publicly improved Afghan-Pakistani bilateral relations. Aziz

added that such a meeting would underscore the two governments' resolve to finish off al-Qaida together.

18. (C) The Deputy Secretary thanked Rassoul and Aziz for letting the U.S. participate. He underscored the deep interest of the President in encouraging this dialogue, starting with the Iftar dinner with Karzai and Musharraf in fall 2006. The President is very mindful of the challenges facing Afghanistan and Pakistan in coming to grips with al-Qaida and creating a united front. The U.S. will do what it can to be supportive, including with regard to the tripartite military commission, intelligence sharing, the Jirga, and economic development in the border areas. He said that the fact that the two sides are discussing a joint commitment against al-Qaida, if publicized, would weaken al-Qaida. al-Qaida survives by exploiting the wedge issues in Afghan-Pakistani relations, making public messages of solidarity very important. A/S Boucher added that al-Qaida is not only playing the two governments off each other, but also tribal groups along the border. "Sub-Jirgas" might be a way to engage tribes along both sides of the border.

19. (C) Other Issues:

-- Continuing the Rassoul-Aziz Channel: Rassoul urged that he and Aziz meet regularly; they can talk frankly with one another about what is working and what is not, and it is less bureaucratic. Aziz did not respond directly, but acknowledged later in the conversation Rassoul's offer to travel to Pakistan if/when they meet again.

-- Improved Tone of Public Remarks: Noting that

Afghan-Pakistani problems are so huge that some cannot help venting their frustration in public, Aziz said he was pleased that in the last several months neither side has spoken out critically against the other ("it has been quiet"). Rassoul agreed that past negative public statements had been counterproductive, and it was difficult to stop the exchanges.

-- Cooperation on Border Crossing: Noting U.S. assistance in rebuilding crossing stations along the Afghan-Pakistani border, A/S Boucher urged the two sides to work together in managing border crossing by the public.

-- Border Security: In response to Aziz's comment about border fences, Rassoul said erecting fences is ineffective and a temporary measure at best; the best solution is to engage the local tribes with ties on both sides to monitor border traffic for terrorists.

-- Tribal Areas Development Initiative: A/S Boucher said the new funding and the Reconstruction Opportunity Zones will help stimulate economic activity along the Peshawar-Jalalabad highway on the Pakistani side of the border. The new Afghan-Tajikistani bridge will also help stimulate trade between Pakistan and Tajikistan which will benefit Afghanistan as well.

-- Refugees: At A/S Boucher's urging, the three sides agreed to approach UNHCR about improving the assistance to refugees returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan.

110. (U) Assistant Secretary Boucher, Charge Dell, Counterterrorism Coordinator Dailey, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Patterson and a notetaker also participated for the U.S. Aziz was unaccompanied. Rassoul was joined by a notetaker.

111. (U) This message has been cleared by the Deputy

Secretary's

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staff.  
DELL